

Erlich/Qureshi Notch First Team Title In Chengdu

After signing up five minutes before the deadline, veteran duo streak to Chengdu crown

Jonathan Erlich and Aisam-UI-Haq Qureshi tasted victory for the first time as a team, claiming the Chengdu Open title on Sunday.

The Israeli-Pakistani duo downed Marcus Daniell and Marcelo Demoliner 6-3, 7-6(3) in one hour and 29 minutes, claiming two of seven break chances. They take home 250 Emirates ATP Doubles Rankings points and split \$96,610 in prize money.

"This week is very special," said Qureshi. "When I came here, I was on one leg and I had an MRI and wasn't sure if I would even play. I signed up with Jon five minutes before the deadline. He was still in Israel. He took the risk and flew all the way here on Sunday. Thanks to him for trusting in me. I just focused on being the best partner I can be. He showed why he's won Wimbledon before and been Top 5 and won 19 titles. Everything he touched was a winner. He took over."

The unseeded veteran team capped a dominant week, having toppled top seeds Oliver Marach and Mate Pavic in the first round and third seeds Santiago Gonzalez and Nenad Zimonjic in Saturday's semi-finals. They dropped just one set throughout the tournament.

"We came here with really good energy," said Erlich. "Both of us were really excited to play together and gave a lot of confidence to each other on the court. We executed really well this week. I said to Aisam that this was one of the best matches he's played and we've played against each other many times. It was a really high level today. I trust him 100 per cent on the court and when you trust your partner, you're taking two steps forward already. I'm happy we played four matches like that."

Individually, 40-year-old Erlich hoisted his 19th tour-level doubles trophy and first since emerging victorious in Shenzhen 2015 (w/Fleming). The former World No. 5 has now triumphed in 12 different seasons.

At the age of 37, Qureshi is enjoying a banner campaign with his fifth title of the season and 16th in total. All five titles have come with different partners, having prevailed with Marcin Matkowski in Auckland, Florin Mergea in Barcelona, Robert Lindstedt in Antalya and Rajeev Ram in Newport.